Poetic Voice Magazine

Volume Sixteen: Winter 2024

Poetic Voice Magazine: Volume Sixteen

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Featured Poem: First Snow by Matsuo Basho

First snow
falling
on the half-finished bridge.

A Haiku from the 17th century

Poetic Voice Magazine Welcomes Submissions

Obelisk Press of Vancouver is pleased to publish this sixteenth volume of ***Poetic Voice Magazine*** which serves to feature the work of aspiring poets.

Poetic Voice Magazine welcomes submissions on a quarterly basis. Please feel free to submit your poetry to

pbruskiewich @ gmail.com

There is no fee to submit.

There is no writer's fee provided by the journal for those who submit.

The publishing rights remain with the writer.

Poetic Commentary

Commentary: Ahh what a gush! by Patrick Bruskiewich

There are some amorous poems
that ‘nere only be writ at night,
where bliss is where our heart do roam,
beneath the glow of soft moonlight.

It is when I remember her touch,
… the softness of her lovely thighs,
and the mystery of her, hid much
beneath pink silk … and fitful sighs.

How she did strip me bare
and grab hold of me … so tight,
then enjoyed me without a care,
for the entire of the night.

She roamed about my body, an explorer
wandering about her undiscovered country.
You would think … plain me … would bore her
but in me she found boundless bounty.

When morning came her panties
she still had on … in vestal bright
but with me she had her fancies
full … she had drained me of my might.

But the top of her was fully bare,
so I suckled at her modest breasts,
as if I were her hungry foal, and she my mare.
Then she wet herself … *ahh what a gush*!

She had to take her pink panties off,
It was then I buried her in kisses, where
her crested mound of Venus stood … aloft
delicately bidding me … without a care!

Now that she was completely bare ...

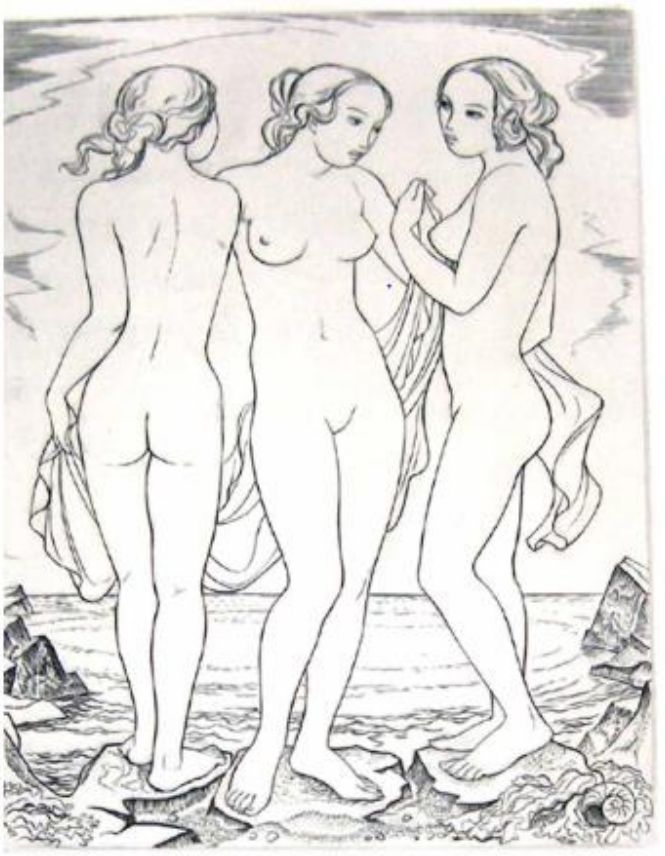
One of the most powerful genres of poetry is erotic poetry, when you try through the use of words to elicit an ardent or passionate response in the reader. This is not all that easy to accomplish, especially if you are a man trying to elicit an ardent and passionate response in cultured women.

One of life's secret is that kissing a woman's breasts with just the right gentleness can bring her to orgasm. I have done this a number of times.

With the young woman in this poem, she was vestal at the beginning of the night, and while we did not enjoy any *entanglement*, by the following morning she knew a thing or two about love, about life, and about the opposite sex.

Pictorial: A Woman and her Box Camera

A fine collection of Art Books



Atelier Press

A growing collection of titles

Editor in Chief: Patrick Bruskiewich

New Poems

Yuki … Yuki … Yuki … by Aki Kurosawa

Yesterday it snowed …
Today it snowed too …
Tomorrow it will snow again!

*Yuki … Yuki … Yuki …**

This should not be
a surprise, for it is
winter here in Japan.

Yuki … Yuki … Yuki …

It is supposed to be
cold and snowy, right …
up to our knees sometimes

Yuki … Yuki … Yuki …

Then here in bustling Tokyo,
It will decide to warm, and
winter knows it is time to go.

* Yuki is Japanese for snow

We are Counting Down the Days by William Webster

Oh my, are people flying around …
here in the Big Apple. It is cold
and so are New Yorkers. It is a big rout …
every day more bad news abounds.

North from DC the bad news creeps.
He wants to *Make America ~~Great~~ Goofy Again* …
all he seems to do is make people weep,
with anguish and wish it was back then …

We New Yorkers have warm hearts,
that are rich beyond words, his way …
he was never one of us … he lived apart.
He was a speculator and we were his play.

We are counting down the days …
we New Yorkers truly are.
When things can go back
to the way they once were …

That was After All, Her World by Patrick Bruskiewich

Tenderly, I unwrapped her as I would
a box of expensive dark
chocolate. If she wanted she could
have stopped me, and pushed us apart.

But she wanted the delight of it,
the joy of pure lust between her and I,
of being completely unashamed, nothing hid
from view. I kissed her here and there … she sighed.

No words were said, yet we understood
Through our soft touch, what brings her pleasures,
Without asking, she spread her legs wide and good,
to lay bare her splendour … her hidden treasures.

Her hair was fiery red … down there
Just like the long curly hair on her head
There she now lay for me, completely bare
Reclined … immodest on her warm, soft bed

I press forward, tickling her pink, softness … touched
with my lips and my tongue the hot flesh
that made her a girl … In a moment she gushed
all over my chin, and exclaimed that was the best …

Sex she had ever had with a boy …
I smiled knowing she really loved girls
quite often. That I was her first boy … at her tender age, a toy
is a toy, is a toy. That was after all, her world!

Pictorial: For Her … What Madness Will Come Next?

What is Pink by Mary O'Neil

Pink is the color of a rose.
They come in other colors
but everyone knows
pink is the mother-color of a rose.
Pink is a new baby,
the inside of a shell …
Pink is a cooked shrimp
and a Canterbury bell.
Pink is peachbloom,
gauzy… frail
the wind's exquisite wedding veil.
Pink is a bonbon,
pink is a blush,
some Easter bunnies
are pink plush.
If you stand in an orchard
In the middle of Spring
and you don't make a sound
you can hear pink sing,
a darling, whispery song of a thing.
Pink is the beautiful little sister
of red my teacher said,
and a ribbon girls tie
round their head.
Pink is the sash

with the lovely fold
you'll remember
when you're old.
Pink is the flower on a lady's hat
that nods and bows this way and that.

Snow and Winter Poems

How like a Winter Hath my Absence Been by William Shakespeare

How like a winter hath my absence been
From thee, the pleasure of the fleeting year!
What freezings have I felt, what dark days seen!
What old December's bareness everywhere!
And yet this time remov'd was summer's time,
The teeming autumn, big with rich increase,
Bearing the wanton burthen of the prime,
Like widow'd wombs after their lords' decease:
Yet this abundant issue seem'd to me
But hope of orphans and unfather'd fruit;
For summer and his pleasures wait on thee,
And thou away, the very birds are mute;
Or if they sing, 'tis with so dull a cheer
That leaves look pale, dreading the winter's near.
Sonnet 97

Blow Blow Thou Winter Wind by William Shakespeare

Blow, blow, thou winter wind,
Thou art not so unkind
As man’s ingratitude;
Thy tooth is not so keen,
Because thou art not seen,

Although thy breath be rude.
Heigh-ho! sing, heigh-ho! unto the green holly:

Most friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly:
Then, heigh-ho, the holly!
This life is most jolly.
Freeze, freeze, thou bitter sky,
That dost not bite so nigh
As benefits forgot:
Though thou the waters warp,
Thy sting is not so sharp
As friend remembered not.
Heigh-ho! sing, heigh-ho! unto the green holly...

Winter-Time by Robert Louis Stevenson

Late lies the wintry sun a-bed,
A frosty, fiery sleepy-head;
Blinks but an hour or two; and then,
A blood-red orange, sets again.

Before the stars have left the skies,
At morning in the dark I rise;
And shivering in my nakedness,
By the cold candle, bathe and dress.

Close by the jolly fire I sit
To warm my frozen bones a bit;
Or with a reindeer-sled, explore
The colder countries round the door.

When to go out, my nurse doth wrap
Me in my comforter and cap;
The cold wind burns my face, and blows
Its frosty pepper up my nose.

Black are my steps on silver sod;
Thick blows my frosty breath abroad;
And tree and house, and hill and lake,
Are frosted like a wedding cake.

Spellbound by Emily Brontë

The night is darkening round me,
The wild winds coldly blow;
But a tyrant spell has bound me
And I cannot, cannot go.
The giant trees are bending
Their bare boughs weighed with snow.
And the storm is fast descending,

And yet I cannot go.
Clouds beyond clouds above me,
Wastes beyond wastes below;
But nothing drear can move me;
I will not, cannot go.

Four Poems by Robert Frost

Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening

Whose woods these are I think I know.
His house is in the village though;
He will not see me stopping here
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer
To stop without a farmhouse near
Between the woods and frozen lake
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake
To ask if there is some mistake.
The only other sound's the sweep
Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.

Desert Places

Snow falling and night falling fast, oh, fast
In a field I looked into going past,
And the ground almost covered smooth in snow,
But a few weeds and stubble showing last.

The woods around it have it - it is theirs.
All animals are smothered in their lairs.
I am too absent-spirited to count;
The loneliness includes me unawares.

And lonely as it is, that loneliness
Will be more lonely ere it will be less –
A blanker whiteness of benighted snow
WIth no expression, nothing to express.

They cannot scare me with their empty spaces
Between stars - on stars where no human race is.
I have it in me so much nearer home
To scare myself with my own desert places.

Dust of Snow

The way a crow
Shook down on me
The dust of snow
From a hemlock tree

Has given my heart
A change of mood
And saved some part
Of a day I had rued.

Stars

How countlessly they congregate
O'er our tumultuous snow,
Which flows in shapes as tall as trees
When wintry winds do blow!—

As if with keenness for our fate,
Our faltering few steps on
To white rest, and a place of rest
Invisible at dawn,--

And yet with neither love nor hate,
Those stars like some snow-white
Minerva's snow-white marble eyes
Without the gift of sight.

Pictorial: A Model and Her Amphora from 1900

The Bells by Edgar Allen Poe

Hear the sledges with the bells –
Silver bells!
What a world of merriment their melody foretells!
How they tinkle, tinkle, tinkle,
In the icy air of night!
While the stars that oversprinkle
All the heavens, seem to twinkle
With a crystalline delight;
Keeping time, time, time,
In a sort of Runic rhyme,
To the tintinnabulation that so musically wells
From the bells, bells, bells, bells,
Bells, bells, bells –
From the jingling and the tinkling of the bells.

In the Bleak Midwinter by Christina Rossetti

In the bleak midwinter
Frosty wind made moan,
Earth stood hard as iron,
Water like a stone;
Snow had fallen, snow on snow,
Snow on snow,

In the bleak midwinter

Long ago.
Our God, Heaven cannot hold Him,
Nor earth sustain;
Heaven and earth shall flee away
When He comes to reign.
In the bleak midwinter
A stable place sufficed
The Lord God Almighty,
Jesus Christ.

Change Upon Change by Elizabeth Barrett Browning

Five months ago the stream did flow,
The lilies bloomed within the sedge,
And we were lingering to and fro,
Where none will track thee in this snow,
Along the stream, beside the hedge.
Ah, Sweet, be free to love and go!
For if I do not hear thy foot,
The frozen river is as mute,
The flowers have dried down to the root:
And why, since these be changed since May,
Shouldst thou change less than they.

And slow, slow as the winter snow
The tears have drifted to mine eyes;
And my poor cheeks, five months ago
Set blushing at thy praises so,
Put paleness on for a disguise.
Ah, Sweet, be free to praise and go!
For if my face is turned too pale,
It was thine oath that first did fail, -
It was thy love proved false and frail, -
And why, since these be changed enow,
Should I change less than thou.

Pictorial: A Picturesque Desert Princess

Snow-Flakes by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Out of the bosom of the Air,
Out of the cloud-folds of her garments shaken,
Over the woodlands brown and bare,
Over the harvest-fields forsaken,
Silent, and soft, and slow
Descends the snow.

Even as our cloudy fancies take
Suddenly shape in some divine expression,
Even as the troubled heart doth make
In the white countenance confession,
The troubled sky reveals
The grief it feels.

This is the poem of the air,
Slowly in silent syllables recorded;
This is the secret of despair,
Long in its cloudy bosom hoarded,
Now whispered and revealed
To wood and field.

Beauty by Charles Baudelaire

Conceive me as a dream of stone:
my breast, where mortals come to grief,
is made to prompt all poets' love,
mute and noble as matter itself.

With snow for flesh, with ice for heart,
I sit on high, an unguessed sphinx
begrudging acts that alter forms;
I never laugh, I never weep.

In studious awe the poets brood
before my monumental pose
aped from the proudest pedestal,
and to bind these docile lovers fast
I freeze the world in a perfect mirror:

Surrealist and Dada Poetry

Sculptor by Sylvia Plath

{*For Leonard Baskin*}

To his house the bodiless
Come to barter endlessly
Vision, wisdom, for bodies
Palpable as his, and weighty.

Hands moving move priestlier
Than priest's hands, invoke no vain
Images of light and air
But sure stations in bronze, wood, stone.

Obdurate, in dense-grained wood,
A bald angel blocks and shapes
The flimsy light; arms folded
Watches his cumbrous world eclipse

Inane worlds of wind and cloud.
Bronze dead dominate the floor,
Resistive, ruddy-bodied,
Dwarfing us. Our bodies flicker

Toward extinction in those eyes
Which, without him, were beggared

Of place, time, and their bodies.
Emulous spirits make discord,

Try entry, enter nightmares
Until his chisel bequeaths
Them life livelier than ours,
A solider repose than death's.

To Lesbia by Andreas Francisus Landesiou

When beauteous Lesbia fires my melting soul (She who the torch and bow from Cupid stole)
By many a smile, by many an ardent kiss,
And with her teeth imprints the tell-tale bliss;
Through all my frame the madding transport glows, Through every vein the tide of rapture flows.
As many stars as o'er heaven's concave shine,
Or clusters as adorn the fruitful vines;
So many blandishments, voluptuous joys,
To inflame my breast, the wily maid employs.
But, dearest Lesbia! gentle mistress! say,
Why thus d' ye wound my lips in amorous play?
With kisses, smiles, and every wanton art,
Why raise the burning fever of my heart?
Let us, my love, on yon soft couch reclined,
Each other's arms around each other twined,
Yield to the pleasing force of strong desire,
And panting, struggling, both at once expire!
For oh, my Lesbia! sure that death is sweet,

When I See the Flowers Anew: A Twelfth Century French Song

When I see the flowers anew
Peeping where the meadows grew,
And I hear the fountain spring
Murmur on the gravelling,
Then young love holds me in thrall,
Which has never healing:
If relief come not at all
I must bide death's dealing.

"I am dark and fair to see,
Young in my virginity,
Rose my colour is and white,
Pretty mouth and green mine eyes;
And my breast it pricks me so
I may not endure it.
For I meddle me to know
Love, and naught can cure it.

"Certes, if I met a man
Who stood in the way I ran.
Freely would I love, for none
Should I ever leave that one.
Often have I heard relate
And for truth to tell,

No one has a joy parfaite
But comes of loving well."

Straight toward the wench I went
For to be with her acquent;
And I saw her white and fair,
And her look was debonaire,
Nor did she a whit forget
Any word I spake her,
Now without delay or let
For her love I prayed her.

Her bare hand I took, the maid
On the thick green grass I laid:
She cried out, to me she swore
Of my play she held no store:
"Take away your lechery;
May God truly shame it!
'Tis too rough and harsh for me,
I can never wame it."

"Sweet love, my pretty maid,
Wherefore now are you afraid?
For you do not know a mite
How this is a merry life.
Mother did not for it die,

That you know right truly,
Nor will you the daughter, why
Do you fear unduly?”

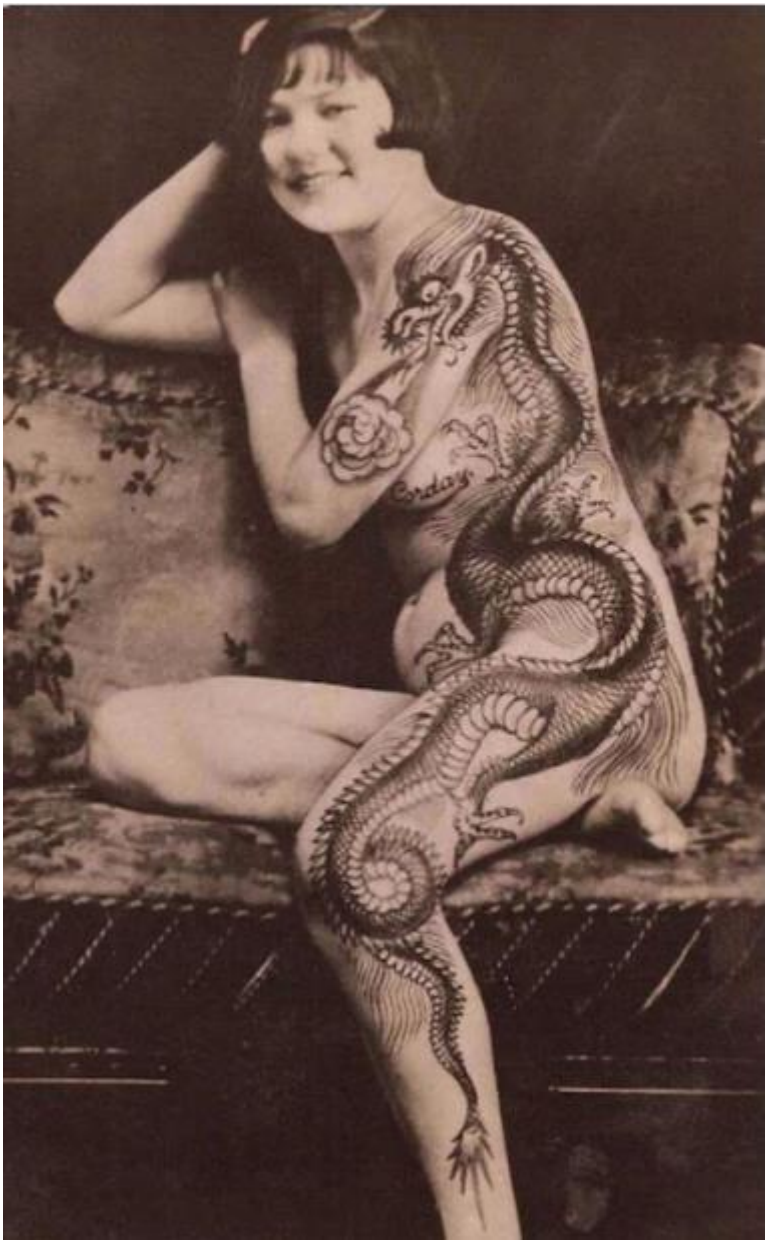
When I had swiped her maidenhood,
And upon her feet she stood,
All aloud to me she cried

“Well am I escaped your side:
Thirteen years since, I was born
As I rightly know;
Never had I other morn
That I loved so.”

On Fruition by Sir Charles Sedley

None but a Muse in love, can tell
The sweet tumultuous joys I feel,
When on Celia's breast I lie.
When I tremble, faint, and die;
Mingling kisses with embraces,
Darting tongues, and joining faces,
Panting, stretching, sweating, cooing,
All in the ecstasy of doing.

Pictorial: A Painted Lady in a Brothel in Shanghai



The Colossus by Sylvia Plath

I shall never get you put together entirely,
Pieced, glued, and properly jointed.
Mule-bray, pig-grunt and bawdy cackles
Proceed from your great lips.
It's worse than a barnyard.

Perhaps you consider yourself an oracle,
Mouthpiece of the dead, or of some god or other.
Thirty years now I have laboured
To dredge the silt from your throat.
I am none the wiser.

Scaling little ladders with gluepots and pails of lysol
I crawl like an ant in mourning
Over the weedy acres of your brow
To mend the immense skull-plates and clear
The bald, white tumuli of your eyes.

A blue sky out of the Oresteia
Arches above us. O father, all by yourself
You are pithy and historical as the Roman Forum.
I open my lunch on a hill of black cypress.
Your fluted bones and acanthine hair are littered

In their old anarchy to the horizon-line.
It would take more than a lightning-stroke
To create such a ruin.
Nights, I squat in the cornucopia
Of your left ear, out of the wind,

Counting the red stars and those of plum-colour.
The sun rises under the pillar of your tongue.
My hours are married to shadow.
No longer do I listen for the scrape of a keel
On the blank stones of the landing.

Seduction by Harold Greenthal,

The Lily swayed coquettishly.
And the Rose,
Whom the murky night had left
Drunk with dew,
Was fired with desire,
And the passion burned his cheeks.
He bent lover-like
Over the virgin Lily,
And his green arms.
Quivering amorously in the breeze,
Slipped ’round her dainty waist,
And her lithe body shook with emotion.
She raised her drooping head.
And held her fresh young lips to his!
The lustful Rose
Now strained her close,
And the virgin Lily struggled
As though Sit were being violated.
Yet, yielding graciously me next instant.
Swung wantonly against her lover! ...

Suddenly they quiet grew,
And slowly disentangled
Leaf from leaf,

And drew apart.
The Violets, quidnuncs every one,
Had looked on all the while
And passed the scandal to the Larks;
Narcissus, becoming inflamed.
Embraced himself
With quite unnatural ardor.
But the ravished Lily
Hung her head in shame
And tried to hide
The tiny bits of gold
That lay sprinkled
Here and there
Along her happy petals,

Two Poems by Alfred Bryan

Enthralled

Teach me to sin —
In love's forbidden ways,
For you can make all passion pure;
The magic lure of your sweet eyes
Each shape of sin makes virtue praise.
Teach me to sin—

Enslave me to your wanton charms,
Crush me in your velvet arms
And make me, make me love you.
Make me fire your blood with new desire,
And make me kiss you—lip and limb,
Till senses reel and pulses swim.
Aye! even if you hate me,
Teach me to sin.

Love Charms

If I cannot be your Master,
let me be your Slave 1
Let me be the wanton of your breast!
Let me be the lover of your limb!

Torture me until the ultimate I crave.

Let me lift unto your lips a redder cup of wine!
Let me whisper in your car some new desire —
A warrior flame your white flesh to incarnadine.
Then, let my love put out the fire.

Wed me. Make me swear allegiance to your breast.
And tell me that your body I must share
With other lovers,—more of you possessed, —
So I have you some time, what need I care?

Pictorial: Tell Me The Truth … Am I Fat?

Flame by George Sterling

Thou art that madness of supreme desire,
Which lacking, beauty is but dross and clay.
Within thy veins is all the fire of day
And all the stars divinity of fire.
Thine are the lips and loins that never tire.
And thine the bliss that makes my soul dismay.
Upon thy breast what god at midnight lay.
To make thy flesh the music of his lyre?
Ah! such alone should know thy loveliness!
Ah! such alone should know thy full caress,
O goddess of intolerable delight!
I beg of Fate the guerdon and the grace,
Far beyond death, to know m thine embrace
Eternal rapture in eternal night.

Consummation by Florence von Wien

Burning—relentless burning —
With the gently caressing fires
that will not be calmed.
A delicious sense of stifling.
Suddenly a fierce storm of sharp,
exquisite pains …

Like little electric needle shocks …

Pierces every tiny part of your body—
Till you are raised out of this earth.
A great calm comes over you then —
And you open languorously, luxuriously
Like an enormous, fresh passion flower
opens its petals to the sun.
Something comes and snuggles into its petals like a honey bee
And they slowly close again—and then
— just nothing then —
The sensation of having no sensations
—great peace, vast
space—and
Nothing, nothing, nothing.

i like my body when it is with your body by e.e. cummings

i like my body when it is with your
body. It is so quite new a thing.
Muscles better and nerves more.
i like your body, i like what it docs,
i like its hows, i like to feel the spine
of your body and its bones, and the trembling
-firm-smooth ness and which i will

again and again and again
kiss, i like kissing this and that of you,
i like, slowly stroking the, shocking fuzz
of your electric furr, and what-is-it-comes
over parting flesh .... And eyes big love-crumbs
and possibly i like the thrill
of under me you so quite new

Equal in their Wantonness by Paul Verlaine

One had sixteen years and the other less:
Both of them slept in the same scented room.
It was a September night, the room hid gloom,
And both were equal in their wantonness.
Each has quitted, to show her nakedness,
The fine nightdress that keeps its flesh perfume.
The younger bends, so women bend their womb,
And her sister kisses her breasts that rise to the caress,
Then falls on her knees, then becomes mad and wild,
And all her mouth exultant of that child
Plunges in the grey shadows, that held the night's
Treasures; and the child, beyond all beguiling,
Counts her dene tune as the sense in her invites
The tragedy that is destroyed by sin's defiling.

Canadian Poems

Two Poems by Archibald Lampman

The Truth

Friend … though thy soul should burn thee, yet be still
Thoughts were not meant for strife, nor tongues for swords.
He that sees clear is gentlest of his words.
And that's not truth that hath the heart to kill.
The whole world's thought shall not one truth fulfil.
Dull in our age, and passionate in youth.
No mind of man hath found the perfect truth.
Nor shalt thou find it; therefore, friend, be still.
Watch and be still, nor hearken to the fool,
The babbler of consistency and rule:
Wisest is he, who, never quite secure.
Changes his thoughts for better day by day:
To-morrow some new light will shine, be sure,
And thou shalt see thy thought another way.

Winter Evening

Tonight the very horses springing by
Toss gold from whitened nostrils. In a dream
The streets that narrow to the westward gleam
Like rows of golden palaces; and high
From all the crowded chimneys tower and die

A thousand aureoles. Down in the west
The brimming plains beneath the sunset rest.
One burning sea of gold. Soon, soon shall fly
The glorious vision, and the hours shall feel
A mightier master; soon from height to height,
With silence and the sharp unpitying stars.
Stern creeping frosts, and winds that touch like steel.
Out of the depth beyond the eastern bars,
Glittering and still shall come the awful night.

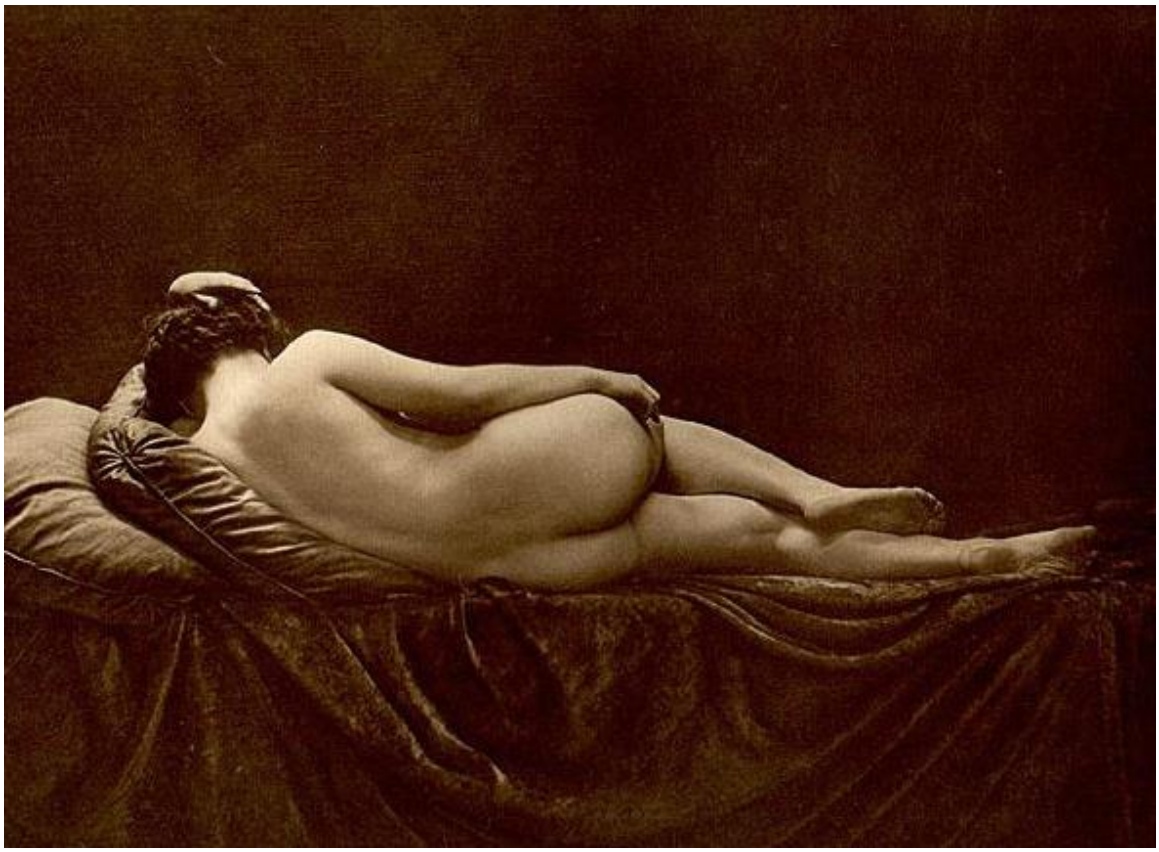
Dawn by Fredrick George Scott

The immortal spirit hath no bars
To circumscribe its dwelling place;
My soul hath pastured with the stars
Upon the meadow-lands of space.

My mind and ear at times have caught.
From realms beyond our mortal reach,
The utterance of Eternal Thought
Of which all nature is the speech.

And high above the seas and lands,
On peaks just tipped with morning light,
My dauntless spirit mutely stands
With eagle wings outspread for flight.

Pictorial: An Odalisque from 1925 …



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Historical Poetry

Poems by Charles Baudelaire

I Love the Naked Ages Long Ago

I love the naked ages long ago
When statues were gilded by Apollo,
When men and women of agility
Could play without lies and anxiety,
And the sky lovingly caressed their spines,
As it exercised its noble machine.
Fertile Cybele, mother of nature, then,
Would not place on her daughters a burden,
But, she-wolf sharing her heart with the people,
Would feed creation from her brown nipples.
Men, elegant and strong, would have the right
To be proud to have beauty named their king;
Virgin fruit free of blemish and cracking,
Whose flesh smooth and firm would summon a bite!
The Poet today, when he would convey
This native grandeur, would not be swept away
By man free and woman natural,
But would feel darkness envelop his soul
Before this black tableau full of loathing.
O malformed monsters crying for clothing!
O ludicrous heads! Torsos needing disguise!
O poor writhing bodies of every wrong size,
Children that the god of the Useful swaths
In the language of bronze and brass!

And women, alas! You shadow your heredity,
You gnaw nourishment from debauchery,
A virgin holds maternal lechery
And all the horrors of fecundity!

We have, it is true, corrupt nations,
Beauty unknown to the radiant ancients:
Faces that gnaw through the heart's cankers,
And talk with the cool beauty of languor;
But these inventions of our backward muses
Are never hindered in their morbid uses
Of the old for profound homage to youth,
—To the young saint, the sweet air, the simple truth,
To the eye as limpid as the water current,
To spread out over all, insouciant
Like the blue sky, the birds and the flowers,
Its perfumes, its songs and its sweet fervors.

Her Hair

O fleece, that down the neck waves to the nape!
O curls! O perfume nonchalant and rare!
O ecstasy! To fill this alcove shape
With memories that in these tresses sleep,
I would shake them like penions in the air!

Languorous Asia, burning Africa,

And a far world, defunct almost, absent,
Within your aromatic forest stay!
As other souls on music drift away,
Mine, O my love! still floats upon your scent.

I shall go there where, full of sap, both tree
And man swoon in the heat of the southern climates;
Strong tresses be the swell that carries me!
I dream upon your sea of amber
Of dazzling sails, of oarsmen, masts, and flames:

A sun-drenched and reverberating port,
Where I imbibe colour and sound and scent;
Where vessels, gliding through the gold and moiré,
Open their vast arms as they leave the shore
To clasp the pure and shimmering firmament.

I'll plunge my head, enamored of its pleasure,
In this black ocean where the other hides;
My subtle spirit then will know a measure
Of fertile idleness and fragrant leisure,
Lulled by the infinite rhythm of its tides!

Pavilion, of autumn-shadowed tresses spun,
You give me back the azure from afar;
And where the twisted locks are fringed with down

Lurk mingled odors I grow drunk upon
Of oil of coconut, of musk, and tar.

A long time! always! my hand in your hair
Will sow the stars of sapphire, pearl, ruby,
That you be never deaf to my desire,
My oasis and my gourd whence I aspire
To drink deep of the wine of memory.

The Jewels

My well-beloved was stripped. Knowing my whim,
She wore her tinkling gems, but naught besides:
And showed such pride as, while her luck betides,
A sultan's favoured slave may show to him.

When it lets off its lively, crackling sound,This blazing blend of metal crossed with stone,

Gives me an ecstasy I've only known
Where league of sound and luster can be found.

She let herself be loved: then, drowsy-eyed,
Smiled down from her high couch in languid ease.
My love was deep and gentle as the seas
And rose to her as to a cliff the tide.

My own approval of each dreamy pose,
Like a tamed tiger, cunningly she sighted:
And candour, with lubricity united,
Gave piquancy to every one she chose.

Her limbs and hips, burnished with changing lustres,
Before my eyes clairvoyant and serene,
Swanned themselves, undulating in their sheen;
Her breasts and belly, of my vine and clusters,

Like evil angels rose, my fancy twitting,
To kill the peace which over me she'd thrown,
And to disturb her from the crystal throne
Where, calm and solitary, she was sitting.

So swerved her pelvis that, in one design,
Antiope's white rump it seemed to graft
To a boy's torso, merging fore and aft.
The talc on her brown tan seemed half-divine.

The lamp resigned its dying flame. Within,
The hearth alone lit up the darkened air,
And every time it sighed a crimson flare
It drowned in blood that amber-coloured skin.

Sorrows of the Moon

Tonight the moon dreams in a deeper languidness,

And, like a beauty on her cushions, lies at rest;
While drifting off to sleep, a tentative caress
Seeks, with a gentle hand, the contour of her breast;

As on a crest above her silken avalanche,
Dying, she yields herself to an unending swoon,
And sees a pallid vision everywhere she'd glance,
In the azure sky where blossoms have been strewn.

When sometime, in her weariness, upon her sphere
She might permit herself to shed a furtive tear,
A poet of great piety, a foe of sleep,

Catches in the hollow of his hand that tear,
An opal fragment, iridescent as a star;
Within his heart, far from the sun, it's buried deep.

The Naked and the Nude by Robert Graves

For me, the naked and the nude
(By lexicographers construed
As synonyms that should express
The same deficiency of dress
Or shelter) stand as wide apart
As love from lies, or truth from art.

Lovers without reproach will gaze
On bodies naked and ablaze;
The Hippocratic eye will see
In nakedness, anatomy;
And naked shines the Goddess when
She mounts her lion among men.

The nude are bold, the nude are sly
To hold each treasonable eye.
While draping by a showman's trick
Their dishabille in rhetoric,
They grin a mock-religious grin
Of scorn at those of naked skin.

The naked, therefore, who compete
Against the nude may know defeat;
Yet when they both together tread

The briary pastures of the dead,

By Gorgons with long whips pursued,

How naked go the sometimes nude!

Pictorial: A Woman and a Man In a State of Bliss

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